3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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garters and belts of buffalo hair. But they did make string and willow matting. There is an account of a mat used on the seat before the fire. Henry[1] says that the mat was of small willows of equal size, fastened together by thread of native make passed through each stick about one foot apart. The mats were ten feet long, four feet broad, and the two ends for two and a half feet were raised slanting from the ground and supported by a kind of sofa. Verendrye says they made wicker work very neatly, flat, and in baskets.

The Mandans used snow-shoes which were only about two and a half feet long.[2] For their dyes and paints they made use of the following: red obtained from buffalo-berries, black from sunflowers, and yellow from a kind of moss which came from the Rocky Mountains. Blue, red, black, yellow and white clays were also used.

An indispensable article of the full dress was the fan. These were made from the large plumes of the eagle, hawk, crow, and a number of other birds, depending on the rank of the owner.

The Mandan pipes differed a trifle from those of their neighbors, being less ornate.[3] They were either of stone, black clay, or yellow clay painted black. The stone pipes were obtained mostly from the Dakotas. Pipes with wooden bowls, lined with stone, were also used. The stem was long and round or flat. Catlin describes one pipe as of red steatite (catlinite) with a stem three feet long, half its length wound with braids of porcupine quills. They also had the calumet pipe which will be considered in connection with the ceremonies.

The Mandans and their neighbors the Arikara and Hidatsa made glass beads, an art which they claimed was taught to them by the Snake Indians. They did not make the glass but used glass obtained through the whites. Lewis and Clarke[4] give a short account of the manufacture of beads which is exceedingly interesting. It may be thus summarized. The secret is known only to a few. Glass of several colors is pounded fine, each color separate; this is washed in several waters until the glass stops staining the water. They then take an

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 340.
[2] Ibid., p. 391.
[3] Maximilian: p. 390.
[4] March 16, 1805.

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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Among a number of other customs, was treaty making with other tribes. This was well described by Henry who accompanied the Mandans and Hidatsa when they went to make a treaty with the Cheyennes. Most of the people went on these treaty visits; the band marched in a procession of fixed order and a number of ceremonial objects were carried exposed throughout the march. The party was met with great ceremony by the new allies and its members were taken into their houses. Several days of ceremonial feasting occurred and finally the head chief of each party adopted a son from the other tribe. After this there was more feasting and several days of trade between the two bands, when both returned home.

The adoption of sons occurred also among the different families. Maximilian describes the adoption of a "medicine son" to whom a sacred pipe was given. The man chose his adopted son through a dream. The new pipe was consecrated and gifts were showered upon the son's family by the adopted father and his relatives. A dance and feast was then held. This custom was prevalent over all the Missouri region.

There were a number of men who dressed and acted like women and were treated in every way as such. These men claimed to follow this life by an order from the spirits given to them in a dream.

Catlin says that the Mandans did not have slaves and there is no mention of them elsewhere. The Arikara, however, had a regular slavery system, and the Crows made slaves and sold them on the Missouri. The Mandans were very good at the sign language so Maximilian tells us. They were expert swimmers, and collected their whole supply of wood by swimming out and towing in the drift wood at the time of the spring breakups.

In point of general culture the Mandans were superior to any of their immediate neighbors, surpassing even the other sedentary people, the Hidatsa and Arikara. Catlin says that they had advanced far in the arts of manufacture and had more comforts and luxuries than other tribes. When Verendrye saw them he, too, was struck by their superior skill. He said that the Mandans dressed leather and worked in feathers better

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

some slight differences, the mode of building resembles, in the main, those of the Mandans, Manitaries, and Arikkaras. Among these differences are the mats which are fastened all round in the first hut, and which I did not observe among the tribes that I visited. The beds, too, are arranged in a different manner. The Mandans and Manitaries are seen in their huts, sitting round the fire, employed in all kinds of domestic labour. The man has, generally, no clothing except the nokka, and is often merely smoking, but the women are never idle. In winter, that is, at the beginning or middle of November, these Indians remove, with the greater part of their effects, to the neighbouring forest, where their winter huts are situated. These consist of precisely similar huts, of rather smaller dimensions. Their departure from the summer huts is determined by the weather, but, as beforesaid, is generally about the middle of November; and their return, in the spring, is usually about the latter end of February, or the beginning of March, so that we may reckon that they pass above eight months in their summer quarters. Inside of the winter huts is a particular compartment, where the horses are put in the evening, and fed with maize. In the daytime they are driven into the prairie, and feed in the bushes, on the bark of poplars. There are, probably, above 300 horses in the two Mandan villages; some of the people, indeed, do not possess any, while others, again, have several. The Mandans and Manitaries, like all the other Indians of this country, sometimes make what are here called caches, or hiding-places, in the vicinity of their villages. These caches are holes, or magazines, underground, often so artfully contrived that it is very difficult to discover them. The Indians frequently go from their winter to their summer village, to fetch any articles they may happen to want, as they invariably leave part of their property behind. When they quit their huts for a longer period than usual, they load their dogs with the baggage, which is drawn in small sledges, made of a couple of thin, narrow boards, nine or ten feet in length, fastened together with leather straps, and with four cross-pieces, by way of giving them firmness. Leather straps are attached in front, and drawn either by men or dogs. The load is fastened to the sledge by straps (for such a sledge drawn by dogs see Vignette XXIX). When the snow is deep, they use snow shoes (Plate XXI. Fig. 4), which are described by Captain Franklin, only those of the Mandans are much smaller, about two feet and a half long; whereas in the north their length is from four to six feet. The Mandans and Manitaries have not, by any means, so many dogs as the Assiniboins, Crows, and Blackfeet. They are rarely of the true wolf's colour, but generally black, or white, or else spotted with black and white. Among the nations further to the north-west they more nearly resemble the wolf, but here they are more like the prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*). We likewise found, among these animals, a brown race, descended from European pointers, hence the genuine bark of the dog is more frequently heard here, whereas among the western nations they only howl. The Indian dogs are worked very hard, have hard blows, and hard fare; in fact, they are treated just as this fine animal is treated among the Esquimaux.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

515 which arises from their continual and severe labour. They generally let their nails grow long.

The rude inhabitants of the prairies are extremely agile and hardy; they bathe, in the depth of winter, in the half frozen rivers, and wear no covering on the upper part of their body under the buffalo robe; they are very expert swimmers, even when quite young. I have already 481 observed that all these nations swim in the same manner as the Brazilian Tapuyas, which is confirmed by other writers. They often practise riding on horseback without a saddle, and very swift horse-racing. They are capital marksmen with the bow; all their senses are remarkably acute.

561 Among the Mandans, and all the nations of the Upper Missouri, as well as among most of 425 the North American tribes, there are certain bands or unions or companies, which are distinguished from the others, and kept together by certain external badges and laws. They have three kinds of war or signal pipes, which are hung round the neck, and are among the badges of the unions, which divide the men into six classes, according to their age. The first band or union is composed of "the foolish dogs," or "the dogs whose name is not known." They are young people from ten to fifteen years of age, and wear a pipe made of the wing bone of the wild goose, which is but small. When they dance, three of them have a long broad piece of red cloth hanging from the back of the neck to the ground. Like every distinct class they have a particular song to accompany their dance. Formerly old people likewise belonged to this band, but then they never dared to retreat before the enemy; this has since been changed to the present limited rule. If a boy desires to enter the first band in order to become a man, he goes to a member of it, addresses him by the appellation of father, and endeavours to purchase the rank, the dance, the song, and the war pipe belonging to it, for certain articles of value, such as blankets, cloth, horses, powder, ball, and the like, which the father pays for him. If this place is sold to him he has a right to all the distinctions and privileges of the band, and he who sold it thereby renounces all claim to it, and endeavours to purchase admission to a higher 561 band. The dances of the several classes are in the main very similar, but there is a particular 535 song belonging to each, and sometimes even a different step. The drum and schischikué must 534 likewise be purchased at the same time. The latter, among this band, is spherical, with a handle, and is made of leather.

561 The second class or band is that of the crows or ravens; it consists of young men from twenty to twenty-five years of age. Frequently young people are in none of the bands for half a year or more. They then go to the band of the crows, and say, "Father, I am poor, but I wish [534] to purchase from you." If the possessor agrees, they then receive the raven's feathers, which the band wear on their heads, a double war-pipe, consisting of two wing bones of a goose joined together, a drum, schischikué, the song and the dance. Each of these bands has a leader, called,

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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country has been friendly and kind ever since their first acquaintance with them—they have ever met and received them, on the prairie or in their villages, with hospitality and honour.

They are handsome, straight and elegant in their forms—not tall, but quick and graceful; easy and polite in their manners, neat in their persons and beautifully clad. When I say "neat in person and beautifully clad," however, I do not intend my readers to understand that such is the case with them all, for among them and most other tribes, as with the enlightened world, there are different grades of society—those who care but little for their personal appearance, and those who take great pains to please themselves and their friends. Amongst this class of personages, such as chiefs and braves, or warriors of distinction, and their families, and dandies or exquisites (a class of beings of whom I shall take due time to speak in a future Letter), the strictest regard to decency, and cleanliness and elegance of dress is observed; and there are few people, perhaps, who take more pains to keep their persons neat and cleanly than they do.

At the distance of half a mile or so above the village, is the customary place where the women and girls resort every morning in the summer months, to bathe in the river. To this spot they repair by hundreds, every morning at sunrise, where, on a beautiful beach, they can be seen running and glistening in the sun, whilst they are playing their innocent gambols and leaping into the stream. They all learn to swim well, and the poorest swimmer amongst them will dash fearlessly into the boiling and eddying current of the Missouri, and cross it with perfect ease. At the distance of a quarter of a mile back from the river, extends a terrace or elevated prairie, running north from the village, and forming a kind of semicircle around this bathing-place; and on this terrace, which is some twenty or thirty feet higher than the meadow between it and the river, are stationed every morning several sentinels, with their bows and arrows in hand, to guard and protect this sacred ground from the approach of boys or men from any directions.

At a little distance below the village, also, is the place where the men and boys go to bathe and learn to swim. After this morning ablution, they return to their village, wipe their limbs dry, and use a profusion of bear's grease through their hair and over their bodies.

The art of swimming is known to all the American Indians; and perhaps no people on earth have taken more pains to learn it, nor any who turn it to better account. There certainly are no people whose avocations of life more often call for the use of their limbs in this way; as many of the tribes spend their lives on the shores of our vast lakes and rivers, paddling about from their childhood in their fragile bark canoes, which are liable to continual accidents, which often throw the Indian upon his natural resources for the preservation of his life.

There are many times also, when out upon their long marches in the prosecution of their almost continued warfare, when it becomes necessary to

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
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plunge into and swim across the wildest streams and rivers, at times when they have no canoes or craft in which to cross them. I have as yet seen no tribe where this art is neglected. It is learned at a very early age by both sexes, and enables the strong and hardy muscles of the squaws to take their child upon the back, and successfully to pass any river that lies in their way.

The mode of swimming amongst the Mandans, as well as amongst most of the other tribes, is quite different from that practiced in those parts of the civilized world, which I have had the pleasure yet to visit. The Indian, instead of parting his hands simultaneously under the chin, and making the stroke outward, in a horizontal direction, causing thereby a serious strain upon the chest, throws his body alternately upon the left and the right side, raising one arm entirely above the water and reaching as far forward as he can, to dip it, whilst his whole weight and force are spent upon the one that is passing under him, and like a paddle propelling him along; whilst this arm is making a half circle, and is being raised out of the water behind him, the opposite arm is describing a similar arcl. in the air over his head, to be dipped in the water as far as he can reach before him, with the hand turned under, forming a sort of bucket, to act most effectively as it passes in its turn underneath him.

By this bold and powerful mode of swimming, which may want the grace that many would wish to see, I am quite sure, from the experience I have had, that much of the fatigue and strain upon the breast and spine are avoided, and that a man will preserve his strength and his breath much longer in this alternate and rolling motion, than he can in the usual mode of swimming, in the polished world.

In addition to the modes of bathing which I have above described, the Mandans have another, which is a much greater luxury, and often resorted to by the sick, but far more often by the well and sound, as a matter of luxury only, or perhaps for the purpose of hardening their limbs and preparing them for the thousand exposures and vicissitudes of life to which they are continually liable. I allude to their vapour baths, or *sudatories*, of which each village has several, and which seem to be a kind of public property—accessible to all, and resorted to by all, male and female, old and young, sick and well.

In every Mandan lodge is to be seen a crib or basket, much in the shape of a bathing-tub, curiously woven with willow boughs, and sufficiently large to receive any person of the family in a reclining or recumbent posture; which, when any one is to take a bath, is carried by the squaw to the sudatory for the purpose, and brought back to the wigwam again after it has been used

These sudatories are always near the village, above or below it, on the bank of the river. They are generally built of skins (in form of a Crow or Sioux lodge which I have before described), covered with buffalo skins

10: Neill H(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

609 622 attentive and polite in conveying our baggage on board. We now perceived another American flag flying in the village on the south side of the river, while that of the Black Cat was still displayed over the hut we had occupied. Our conductor now informed us the flag we saw in the opposite village was his property, and had been hoisted by his orders over his own hut, where he begged we would take up our lodgings. The young men, I [481 492] observed were very prompt in getting our horses over. They fastened a line to the horse's mouth, the end of which one of them takes in his teeth, and swims on ahead, while others swim along on each side, and in the rear, draws the horse on very expeditiously. They swim remarkably swift, and notwithstanding [481] the Missouri at this place is half a mile wide, and the current very strong, they drift down but a very considerable distance before they land.

501 Their canoes are of very singular construction and a stranger would scarcely dare venture his life in them to cross such a deep and rapid stream. They are of a circular form; the timbers are nothing but a few bent willows of about three inches in circumference, over which is stretched a raw buffalo hide, with the hair inside, and sewed first to the gunwales which are generally of a willow, about two inches in diameter. I was really surprised to see the great weight that one of those slender vessels would carry. We embarked, baggage, saddles, etc., weighing at least 200 pounds, Mr. Chaboillez and myself, and our ferryman, who was a remarkably stout fellow. Our canoe or dish would have supported at least 100 pounds more. What they make use of, in lieu of a paddle, is a pole about five feet long, split at one end so as to admit of a piece of board, about two feet long, and half a foot broad, which is lashed to the pole and forms a kind of cross, and as there is but one made use of for each canoe, and he that paddles pulls directly for the opposite shore, every stroke he gives turns his dish almost entirely around; when, to preserve his position and place him fronting his intended, route he must give a stroke upon the other hand which brings him up again, and so on until he gets over the river, which, however, is not accomplished until they have drifted down nearly a mile.

501 462 Some of them, I observed, were more expert than others in managing their dishes, and did not drift more than a quarter of a mile. But as these vessels are very light they have the precaution to carry them upon their heads, or slung upon their backs to a considerable distance higher up the river, than where they wish to land. When we were on the water our conductor repeatedly made signs to us to salute the flag, by firing our guns, but we did not think proper to comply with his wishes or pretended we did not comprehend him.

622 574 609 We soon after landed at the village, which is situated upon the very edge of the bank. Here we were received by another

437 willing and ready to serve you as long as you have any property.
177 But when all is expended you must shift for yourself, as they will pretend they do not understand you any longer. Besides paying our host [343] beforehand, I promised him a tobacco-pipe on my departure, if I were then pleased with his conduct during our stay. His pay consisted of the following articles: 60 balls and powder, 4 large knives, 2 small knives, 1 fathom tobacco, 1 dozen rings, 1 dozen hawk-bills, 6 flints, 3 worms, 3 awls, and 1/4 pound blue beads.

164 [343] The natives at present are mostly affected with a bad cough, which daily takes some of them off. Aged and infirm persons, and young children, are the common victims to this disease. It is a kind of whooping-cough, which has appeared all along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, on the Saskatchewan even to Fort des Prairies, and in several other parts of the North West, carrying off many people

241 July 21st. I set off early on horseback with part of my people
[462 for the upper villages. We passed extensive fields of corn, beans,
561] squashes, and sunflowers. Many women and children were already
412 employed in clearing and hoeing their plantations. Their hoes are the shoulderblade of a buffalo, to which is fastened a crooked stick for a handle; the soil not being stony, this slight implement answers every purpose. The road first led over two hills, after which we came to a smooth and pleasant plain for about two miles to the Saulteur (Soulier) [Amahami—Analyst] village, of about 40 huts.

361 [362] . . These villages are surrounded by a kind of stockade, princi-
417 pally made of driftwood, which has a miserable appearance and is daily falling to pieces; but I am told that upon any emergency it can be put into a tolerably good state of defense at very short notice, as every man, woman, and child lends a hand.

526 We witnessed a diversion which takes place almost every day
● 481 between the Mandanes and Saulteurs (Souliers). It is the exercise
702 of running long foot races, in order to be prepared for the emergency of being dismounted and obliged to fly from their enemies at war. They assemble upon a beautiful green near the village, where, having remained some time, calling out to their comrades to come and run, they set off in a file on a slow trot, entirely naked, taking the road that leads up the hills to the S., about a mile from the village. Passing near those rising grounds, they disappear, and are not seen till they reappear from the S.E., down a steep hill and over a level plain, to the spot whence they started. Here they do not stop, but rush on to the Missourie, and plunge in headlong, all

526 covered with dust and sweat. The race is at least six miles long,
●481 and it is surprising to see what a great distance some of them gain
702 upon others. This violent exercise is performed on the hottest summer days, and it is a wonder that some of them do not pay dearly for their temerity.

541 During my absence yesterday [July 21 - Analyst] my people, who remained here, witnessed a horse race. The Mandanes assembled in great numbers on horseback, and rode about three miles below the village, where all mustered. They set out in a body, pell-mell, whipping and kicking their horses, directing their course along the foot of the hills, and made a long circuit at full speed around the village. Some of their horses appeared very swift and spirited, but others were miserable animals. On their arrival, they performed their warlike manoeuvres on horseback, feigning their different attacks upon the enemy, giving their strokes of the battleax and thrusts of the spear, and defending themselves in turn by parrying blows and covering themselves with their shields.

526 ...I observed one particular game among the Mandanes, which the young men were continually playing. Two persons are each provided with a stick six feet long, on which are cut a certain number of notches, an inch long, in the intervals of which are fixed the same number of small bunches of feathers of divers colors, with three pieces of wood, 16 inches square, one near each end, and one in the middle; these are perforated in the center, and through them is passed the rod, painted of divers colors. Each notch has a particular mark, the nature of which they themselves only understand—indeed, the same may be said of the whole game. The ground on which they play is a smooth level space, about 40 paces long and 5 broad. The players stand side by side, start from one end of the ground, and trot on till they are halfway through, when one of them throws a ball gently ahead, in such a manner that it will not roll further than the space allowed for the game; at the same time both players push their rod forward to overtake and keep pace with the ball, but not to check its course. They then examine the particular notch or bunch of feathers at which the ball stops, and count accordingly.

304 The greater part of the men—Big Bellies, Mandanes, and
787 Saulteurs (Souliers)—have lost a joint of several fingers, [364]
785 particularly of the left hand, and it is not uncommon to see only the